

CHAPTER 8: The Selection Menu

The Selection menu contains commands that let you create, save, open, and manipulate selections and masks; and perform special effects like Drop Shadow and Extrude.

Selection Type

The Selection Type hierarchical menu offers three choices for selections:

Off: The document has no selections or masks.

Selection: The document has a selection mask.

Document: The document has a separate document acting as a selection or mask.

Masks control how paint, paste, and filter operations affect a document. Color It! supports two types of masks:

Selection masks and Document masks.

Selection masks are made with any of the selection tools, and temporarily protect portions of a document, similar to the way masking tape protects portions of a wall as you paint.

Document masks are used for special effects and blends. A document mask is a second document linked to the original. The gray levels in the document mask control how paste, paint or filter operations affect the original document. Pure white areas in the document mask act as if completely transparent—they reflect changes made to the original document completely. Pure black areas in the document mask are completely protected from changes in the original document. In gray areas of the document mask, the amount of change in the original document is directly related to the gray level in the document mask: the lighter the gray in an area of the document mask, the greater the effect of changes in the original document.

Masks can be turned on and off by selecting the appropriate selection type under the Selection Type menu.

Document Mask

The Document Mask hierarchical menu has several options for masks:

New Mask command creates a new blank document (white), brings it to the front and names it by adding (Mask 2) to the end of original document's name.

The Open Mask... command brings up a standard Open dialog box where you may choose an existing document to use as a mask.

Any document open at the same time as the original document can be used as a document mask. To use an existing open document as a document mask, select it from the list at the bottom of the Document Mask menu. The selected document is linked to the original document as a document mask and is brought to the front.

A color document chosen as a mask must be converted to a grayscale document with the same resolution. An alert dialog opens to let you convert the document.

When the document mask is active, the original document appears in the Document Mask hierarchical menu with a bullet (•) in front of it.

When the original document is active, the current document mask appears in the Document Mask hierarchical menu with a diamond (◊) in front of it.

Mask Operations

The Operations command displays a hierarchical menu with commands for modifying masks.

The Invert Mask command inverts all gray levels in the mask. White becomes black;

black becomes white; 30% black becomes 70% black, etc.

The Selection To Mask command converts an active selection to a mask.

Anything inside of the selection is white (unprotected) in the mask; anything outside the selection becomes black (protected).

This command is very different from a Selection mask, which makes only a temporary mask in the original document. The Selection To Mask command creates a mask document which may be used over and over.

The Mask To Selection command takes the current mask and converts it to a selection in the original document. The gray levels of any of the document mask are retained in the the conversion to selections in the original document.

The Add Selection command adds the current selection filled with white to the mask document. This area is completely unprotected from any operations performed.

The Subtract Selection command adds the current selection filled with black to the mask document. This area is completely protected from any operations performed.

The Add Colors command adds all colors into the image that are within the document colors to the mask at 100% opacity so these gray levels are protected in the original document.

The Subtract Colors command subtracts all colors into the image that are within the document colors from the mask, making them 100% transparent.

The Palette Colors To Mask command moves all colors into the image that are within the document colors to the document mask and fills the document mask with black.

Select All

The Select All command [Command-A] makes the entire contents of a document the active selection. Double-clicking any selection tools also selects the entire document.

Select None

The Select None command [Command-D] deselects whatever is currently

selected.

Invert Selection

The Invert Selection command lets you select everything except the currently selected region. This command is very helpful for creating masks.

Grow Selection...

The Grow Selection... command opens a dialog box where you can set the number of pixels from 1 to 16 to increase the radius from the current selection.

Shrink Selection...

The Shrink Selection... command opens a dialog box where you can set the number of pixels 1 to 16 to decrease the radius from the current selection.

Select Similar

The Select Similar command selects all pixels in a document that have the same color values as those in the active selection.

Feather...

The Feather... command controls the blending between the active selection and the areas surrounding it. The greater the amount of feathering (from 1 to 64) entered in the dialog, the wider the area where the image blends into the background. The Normal type feathers half the width inside the selection edge and half outside. Inward and Outward types feather only on one side of the selection edge.

Border...

The Border command creates a feathered selection with the edge of the current selected area as its center. In this mode, the selection is feathered both inside and outside half the number of pixels entered in the Width textbox.

Smooth Edges...

The Smooth Edges command cleans up rough or jagged selections. It has three settings: Light, Medium, and Heavy which control the amount of smoothing.

Drop Shadow...

The Drop Shadow... command simplifies creating shadows for selections and type. The left portion of the dialog box gives a visual reference to the shadow's positioning.

The Feather slider controls the amount of feathering of the shadow by moving the slider bar, clicking on the pointers at each end of the slider or entering a number of pixels in the textbox.

The Intensity slider controls the opacity of the shadow by moving the slider

bar, clicking on the pointers at each end of the slider or entering a percentage in the textbox.

The Offset area controls the positioning of the shadow in relation to the selection. Enter numbers in the Horiz (Horizontal) and Vert (Vertical) textboxes.

The Units pop-up lets you choose from pixels, inches, centimeters, picas, points or percent.

Extrude...

The Extrude... command simplifies creating 3D edges for selections and type. The left portion of the dialog box gives a visual reference to the extrusion's positioning.

The Distance slider controls the depth of the extrusion by moving the slider bar, clicking on the pointers at each end of the slider or entering a number of pixels in the textbox.

The Direction radio buttons control the angle of the extrusion. Click the button that corresponds to the direction you wish.

The Operation radio buttons let you choose between filling the extrusion area with a fill color (such as the type above), or making the extrusion an active selection after the operation is performed (such as the type at the left).

Hide Marquee

The Hide Marquee command [Command-H] hides the moving dotted line showing the edges of a selection without deselecting.

Pick Up/Put Down Selection

This toggle command lets you pick up and move a selection or place a selection while keeping it active.

Use Selection As Mask

This command lets you paint or perform other operations within a selection while protecting the outside area.